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» By looking at Deep Heat's physical structure, researchers hope to develop more products. Photograph: Robert Perry

Deep study into pain relief treatment

Peter Ranscombe

THE maker of Deep Heat is teaming up with scientists at Edinburgh University to improve the way the pain treatment performs.

Mentholatum, which is based in the United States but has its UK operations in East Kilbride, will work with the Edinburgh Complex Fluids Partnership (ECFP) to take three-dimensional images of Deep Heat's structure on a microscopic level while it undergoes physical testing.

Tiffany Wood, who runs the ECFP, said: "Fundamentally,

we need to better understand how Deep Heat behaves when it is topically applied and during processing."

By looking at the ointment's physical structure, researchers expect to help develop further products, based on "objective evidence and hard statistical data, rather than rely solely on subjective assessments".

While companies regularly examine the chemical structure of medicines, examining physical properties on a microscopic level requires more specialised equipment.

Colin Brown, director of

research and quality development at Mentholatum, said: "Utilising modern scientific techniques to generate new data, even for well-established products like Deep Heat Rub, represents an exciting opportunity to extend our products' life cycles."

Mentholatum, which is owned by Japanese drugs firm Rohto Pharmaceutical, has invested £8 million in upgrading its East Kilbride factory, one of 26 plants around the world where it also makes products such as Oxy anti-spot cream and dry-eye treatment Rohto.